

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 08419 251908Z

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AGS: PINS, ASEC, GR

SUBJ: POLYTECHNION DEMONSTRATION

REF: ATHENS 8396

1. THE WEEK LONG COMMEMORATION OF THE POLYTECHNION UPRISING OF 1973 HAS ENDED WITHOUT VIOLENCE BUT WITH A SOMEWHAT EMOTIONALLY SPENT ATHENIAN POPULATION. THE CLIMAX OF THE EVENTS WAS THE TWO-MILE MARCH OF UPWARD TO 200,000-300,000 GREEKS FROM THE POLYTECHNION CAMPUS PAST THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WHERE DEMONSTRATORS UNIVERSALLY SHOUTED "OUT AMERICAN" CHANTS AND MADE FIVE-FINGERED DEROGATORY GREEK GESTURE KNOWN AS THE "MOUNTZA." WHILE EMBASSY PREMISES UNSCATHED, WEEK HAS HARDLY BEEN A PLUS FOR AMERICAN IMAGE IN GREECE. SOME FOREIGN OBSERVERS
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 08419 251908Z

SUGGEST IT COULD PRESAGE UPSURGE IN PREVIOUSLY SUBSIDING ANTI-AMERICANISM.

2. THE CLEAR MARXIST EXPLOITATION OF THE COMMEMORATION GAVE THE PROCEEDINGS - WHICH LITERALLY INVOLVED UP TO 500,000 GREEKS IN PERSONAL ATTENDANCE AT ONE OR ANOTHER EVENT - AND THROUGH THE EXTENSIVE PRESS AND TELEVISION COVERAGE, THE WHOLE GREEK NATION - A PRONOUNCED ANTI-AMERICAN COLORATION. ALL ARE LONG AGO INURED TO "OUT AMERICAN" SHOUTS, BUT THE LINKAGE OF THE OFFICIAL AMERICAN PRESENCE TO THE MILITARY POLICE TORTURERS, THE VIOLATORS OF THE POLYTECHNION PRECINCTS A YEAR AGO, AND GREEK JUNTA SPONSORS OF THE CYPRUS COUP, WAS ACCELERATED BY THE MARXIST STRATEGY. BECAUSE OF THE NEAR MYSTICAL ACCLAMATION WITH WHICH THE POLYTECHNION EVENTS IS NOW GREETED BY THE GREEK PUBLIC, THIS LINKAGE IS UNFORTUNATE AND NOT EASILY IGNORED, THOUGH IT EQUALLY MUST NOT BE EXAGGERATED.

3. THE DEMONSTRATIONS ALSO INDICATE A HIGH DEGREE OF RADICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONAL MUSCLE. ASIDE FROM CARAMANLIS HIMSELF, WITH THE COMBINED PRESTIGE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND HIS PARTY, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER ANY OTHER FORCE NOW EXISTS IN GREECE WHICH HAS THE VERVE AND COMPETENCE TO DRAW HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF GREEKS TO A LEGITIMATE PUBLIC EVENT AND TURN THEM INTO WELL-DISCIPLINED, IF EXPLOITED, DEMONSTRATORS. THIS CAPABILITY COULD POSE DISTINCT PROBLEMS FOR GOG AS IT SEEKS TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE STUDENT MILITANTS ON A SCORE OF ACADEMIC AND NOW POLITICAL, ISSUES IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

4. THESSALONIKI 775 DESCRIBES POLYTECHNION EVENTS IN NORTH. AT PATRAS ABOUT 5,000 STUDENTS MARCHED TO USIS WHERE TEN MINUTE RALLY WITH USUAL ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS STAGED. PATRAS GATHERING WAS MARSHALLED BY STUDENTS WEARING COMMUNIST INSIGNIA.

5. STUDENT LEFTISTS HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED, AS YET, IN CAPTURING THE POLYTECHNION IMAGE FOR EXCLUSIVE, PARTISAN PURPOSES. BEFORE THIS LONG WEEKEND FEATURING SOME MAOIST/MARXIST-SPONSORED EVENTS, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF GREEKS DEMONSTRATED THEIR RESPECT FOR THE POLYTECHNION
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PAGE 03 ATHENS 08419 251908Z

SYMBOL BY PRIVATE VISITS TO THE SCHOOL. INDEED, SPECTATORS AT POLYTECHNION YESTERDAY AFTERNOON INCLUDED SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF MIDDLE-AGED FAMILY GROUPS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND VERY ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH LONGSTANDING GREEK TRADITIONAL ADHERENCE TO "ELEFThERIA" (FREEDOM). MANY GREEKS UNDOUBTEDLY FELT THE EVENTS OF THIS WEEKEND WERE EXCESSIVE AND RECOGNIZED THAT SITUATION WAS BEING EXPLOITED. AN "ESTABLISHMENT" HAND WAS KEPT IN THE PROCEEDINGS. FORMER PRIME MINISTER CANELLOPOULOS VISITED THE SCHOOL THE EVENING

OF NOVEMBER 23, PRESENTED A WREATH, MADE A SHORT SPEECH,
AND WAS WELL RECEIVED. THE NEW RECTOR OF THE POLYTECHNION
ADDRESSED THE STUDENTS SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND GAVE AN
OFFICIAL BLESSING TO THEIR COMMEMORTION. NONETHELESS,
MAOIST-MARXIST ELEMENTS HAVE MADE PROGRESS IN USING THE
POLYTECHNION MYTHOLOGY FOR THEIR PROPAGANDA.
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